



# November Health Promotion Toolbox

## Tobacco Free Living

### Message for Commanding Officers

Tobacco kills more than 5 million people worldwide each year, including 480,000 people in the U.S., and is the leading cause of preventable death in the world.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Surgeon General advocates a tobacco free lifestyle to prevent cancer, chronic lung disease, heart disease, stroke, and other health issues. For every person who dies from a smoking-related disease, about 30 more people will suffer from at least one serious disease as a result of smoking.<sup>2</sup>

Tobacco use is a serious problem in the military and the Department of the Navy (DoN) and can have a serious impact on readiness and the successful completion of military training. Results of the 2013 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment indicated that tobacco use was higher in the military compared to the general U.S. population.<sup>3</sup> 36 to 40 percent of tobacco users in the military started using tobacco during active duty.<sup>4</sup> There is good news though: the majority of Sailors and Marines do not use tobacco, and a majority of military and civilian tobacco users report that they want to quit.<sup>5</sup>

### What Can Leaders Do?

- Set a command climate that promotes a [tobacco free lifestyle](#).
- At every opportunity, encourage Sailors, Marines, civilians, and family members to [quit tobacco](#) and recognize those who quit.
- Review current command [tobacco policy, instructions, and practices](#). Consider not only the lost work time and productivity due to tobacco breaks, but the effects upon non-smoking and non-tobacco using command members and the risks of secondhand smoke exposure.
- Share information about [secondhand smoke](#) with Sailors, Marines, and civilians so they know the harmful ways it can affect their children and family members.
- Distribute information about programs that can [help Sailors, Marines, civilians, and family members quit tobacco](#), including your local tobacco cessation program, [Quit Tobacco—Make Everyone Proud](#) and the American Cancer Society's [Great American Smokeout](#) that happens annually on the third Thursday of November.



## References

- <sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Tobacco. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/>. Published May 2014. Accessed 7 October 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. Printed with corrections, January 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2013. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/HRA2013-annual-report.pdf>. Prepared 2014.
- <sup>4</sup> Bondurant S, and Wedge R. editors. Committee on Smoking Cessation in Military and Veteran Populations; Institute of Medicine Combating Tobacco Use in Military and Veteran Populations. [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12632](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12632). Published 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> Barlas, F., Higgins, W., Pflieger, J., Diecker, K., et al. 2011 Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. <http://www.health.mil/~media/MHS/Report%20Files/Final%202011%20HRB%20Active%20Duty%20Survey%20Exec%20Summary.ashx>. Published February 2013.